

# PLAY IT SAFE!

■ **Everywhere we look, from the smallest of towns to the busiest metropolis, crime seems to be getting worse, criminals more brazen — but we don't have to be victims! We can protect ourselves — even fight back — by learning a few basics of defensive living. These are great pointers to be aware of all of the time, not just during a deployment.**

## AT HOME

- Install a peephole so you can see who is at the door before opening it.
- Always ask repair/delivery persons for identification before opening your door.
- Don't list your first name on your mailbox or house signs.
- If possible, use an answering machine to screen calls. Never reveal you are home alone.
- Keep curtains/blinds closed at night to keep yourself from being observed.
- Good exterior lighting is the biggest deterrent to crime.
- Door safety chains can break easily, so don't rely on them. Invest in a good bolt lock.
- Jam the track of sliding glass doors with a thick, wooden dowel.
- Never leave house keys under doormats, in mailboxes, etc. Provide keys only to trusted neighbors or friends.
- Teach yourself and your children to use the Internet safely. Do not use your full name. Do not discuss travel plans or the fact that you are alone.
- If you plan to decorate your home prior to your spouse's return, do it the day of the homecoming. It is an advertisement that you may be home alone.

## ON THE STREET

- Be alert and aware of your surroundings; people who are preoccupied or who look confused are targets.
- Always have keys in hand when approaching your car or home. They can be used as a weapon if necessary.
- Don't be afraid to ask store clerks or security personnel to escort you to your vehicle.
- Do not speak in public about your spouse being deployed or the name of his/her command. You don't want to "advertise" that you are home alone.
- When shopping and paying for merchandise, never expose large sums of money.
- Always be alert and cautious when using ATMs.
- Avoid ATMs at night, or use them in well-lighted areas visible from the street.
- If you are renting property and find the locks on doors inadequate, lighting poor, etc., notify the landlord immediately in writing. If the corrections do not occur within a reasonable amount of time, call the Navy Housing Welcome Center (445-2832) and ask to talk with someone regarding landlord-tenant mediation.
- If you are renting or living in base housing, you are strongly encouraged to have Renters' Insurance.

Your personal property is usually not covered in the case of fire, flood, theft, or vandalism. Call around for the best rate for you. Most insurance companies charge less than \$200 a year for approximately \$10,000 in coverage.

- Contact COMNAVBASE Crime Prevention Unit (444-1708) and request a home crime prevention survey — IT'S FREE! A specially trained police officer will be able to assist you in evaluating your present home security level and recommend areas that may be improved upon to protect your family and home.

## IN YOUR CAR

- Keep doors locked at all times, including when riding in the car.
- Before entering your car, check inside and underneath.
- Never go to your home if you feel you are being followed. Rather, head for a police station, fire station, or store that is open for business.
- If your car breaks down, stay in your car. Don't take a ride from a stranger. Ask strangers to call for help.
- If stopped by police or any other official vehicle, always ask for ID before getting out of your car.
- If someone hits your car, wait until others or police arrive—it may be a trick to get you out of your car.
- Never pick up a hitchhiker or stop to help a stranded motorist. If you want to help another motorist, go to a phone and call for help.
- Ship/Squadron bumper stickers help to identify you as being home alone.

**Contact your local police department or rape-crisis center for a list of self-defense courses near you.**



**FLEET &  
FAMILY  
SUPPORT  
CENTERS**  
OF HAMPTON ROADS

Little Creek  
462-7563

Newport News  
688-NAVY

Norfolk  
444-2102

Northwest  
421-8770

Oceana  
433-2912

Yorktown  
887-4606

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